

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3812

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a demonstration project on priorities in the scheduling of appointments of veterans for health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2004

Mr. POMEROY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a demonstration project on priorities in the scheduling of appointments of veterans for health care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. DEMONSTRATION PROJECT ON PRIORITIES IN**
4 **SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS OF VET-**
5 **ERANS FOR HEALTH CARE THROUGH THE**
6 **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

7 (a) PROJECT REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Veterans
8 Affairs shall carry out a demonstration project to assess

1 the feasibility and advisability of providing for priorities
2 in the scheduling of appointments of veterans for health
3 care through the Department of Veterans Affairs in ac-
4 cordance with the following:

5 (1) The Department of Veterans Affairs Wait-
6 ing Time for Appointments goals (30–30–20) of
7 2000.

8 (2) The provisions of the Veterans Health Ad-
9 ministration directive entitled “Priority For Out-
10 patient Medical Services and Inpatient Hospital
11 Care” (VHA Directive 2002–059).

12 (3) The provisions of the Veterans Health Ad-
13 ministration directive entitled “Priority Scheduling
14 for Outpatient Medical Services and Inpatient Hos-
15 pital Care for Service Connected Veterans” (VHA
16 Directive 2003–062), dated October 23, 2003.

17 (b) PERIOD OF PROJECT.—The Secretary shall carry
18 out the demonstration project under subsection (a) during
19 the two-year period beginning on October 1, 2004.

20 (c) LOCATIONS OF PROJECT.—(1) The Secretary
21 shall carry out the demonstration project under subsection
22 (a) throughout each of three Veterans Integrated Service
23 Networks (VISNs) selected by the Secretary for purposes
24 of the project.

1 (2) In selecting Veterans Integrated Service Net-
2 works under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure
3 that the demonstration project is carried out in an urban
4 area, a rural area, and a highly rural area.

5 (d) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS AND AUTHORITIES.—

6 (1) Except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3), in car-
7 rying out the demonstration project under subsection (a)
8 the Secretary shall schedule appointments for veterans for
9 outpatient medical services and inpatient hospital care
10 through the Department in accordance with the goals and
11 directives referred to in subsection (a).

12 (2) The veterans covered by the demonstration
13 project shall include any veteran residing in a Veterans
14 Integrated Service Network covered by the project, wheth-
15 er a new or current enrollee with the Department, and
16 including veterans with service-connected disabilities and
17 veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

18 (3) The Secretary shall schedule each appointment
19 under the demonstration project in a Department facility
20 unless, as determined by the Secretary—

21 (A) the cost of scheduling the appointment in
22 a Department facility exceeds the cost of scheduling
23 the appointment in a non-Department facility to an
24 unreasonable degree; or

1 (B) the scheduling of the appointment in a non-
2 Department facility is required for medical or other
3 reasons.

4 (4) In carrying out the demonstration project, the
5 Secretary may utilize the Preferred Pricing Program
6 (PPP) of the Department, or similar programs or authori-
7 ties, in the locations covered by the project.

8 (5) In this subsection, the terms “Department facil-
9 ity” and “non-Department facility” have the meaning
10 given those terms in section 1701 of title 38, United
11 States Code.

12 **SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT ON WAITING TIMES FOR APPOINT-**
13 **MENTS FOR CARE AND SERVICES.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 31 each
15 year, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the
16 Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the
17 House of Representatives a report on the waiting times
18 of veterans for appointments for health care and services
19 from the Department during the preceding year.

20 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—Each report under
21 subsection (a) shall specify, for the year covered by the
22 report, the following:

23 (1) A tabulation of the waiting time of veterans
24 for appointments with the Department for each cat-
25 egory of primary or specialty care or services fur-

1 nished by the Department, displayed by particular
2 Department facility and by Veterans Integrated
3 Service Network.

4 (2) An identification of the categories of spe-
5 cialty care or services for which there are lengthy
6 delays for appointments at particular Department
7 facilities or throughout particular Veterans Inte-
8 grated Service Networks, and, for each category so
9 identified, recommendations for the reallocation of
10 personnel, financial, and other resources to address
11 such delays.

12 (c) REPORT ON DEMONSTRATION PROJECT.—The
13 report under subsection (a) for 2006 (to be submitted not
14 later than January 31, 2007) shall include information on
15 the demonstration project carried out under section 1.
16 That information shall include—

17 (1) a description of the conduct of the project,
18 including the Veterans Integrated Service Networks
19 selected for the project, the number of veterans cov-
20 ered by the project, the number and timeliness of
21 appointments scheduled under the project, and the
22 costs of carrying out the project;

23 (2) an assessment of the feasibility and advis-
24 ability of implementing the project nationwide; and

- 1 (3) such other information with respect to the
- 2 project as the Secretary considers appropriate.

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